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Montana Folk Festival: A tremendous success

The 2014 Montana Folk Festival in Butte has been declared a tremendous artistic and economic success by its producers.

"The festival was a success on every point we use to measure it," said Festival Director George Everett. "This was the biggest, best and most beautiful Montana Folk Festival we have produced yet," he added.

Much of the credit for the smooth operation of the event goes to the team of staff and volunteers that have pitched in to help and honed their skills over the past seven years.

"Thanks to the coordinated efforts of hundreds of volunteers, we were able to properly greet and entertain a large number of guests, including friends and family from throughout the world," said Everett.

The festival was not without complications. A thunderstorm and downpour preempted the last set at the Original Stage on Friday night, there were more than a dozen medical calls, mostly heat related, and a few last-minute schedule changes.

Contributions to the red buckets wielded by festival ambassadors were tallied at \$70,000 in mid-July, and donations were still coming in.

The fifth annual Montana Folk Festival is July 10-12, 2015. For details as they develop, visit www.montanafolkfestival.com.

MORE CONGRATS TO ...

Kalispell artist **Sherry Wells**, whose "Twice Thrown Tray" was selected for "Hand-made in America," on display July 4-Aug. 31 at Singing Stone Gallery and Studio in Tampa, FL. The multi-media exhibition features handmade fine art and contemporary craft that are rich in traditions and expressive of regional craft artisans, and their contributions to America's cultural heritage. Over a hundred artists from all over the country submitted their works for the juried exhibit; 29 artists were chosen, representing seven states.



"Twice Thrown Tray" by Sherry Wells

Billings artist **Jane Waggoner Deschner**, whose work was on display Aug. 7-30 at the Hap Gallery in Portland's Pearl District as part of "Fail-Safe: Discomforts Close to Home," a group exhibition of contemporary textile and fiber-based art curated by Marci Rae McDade, the editor of *Surface Design Journal*. The traveling exhibit, organized by Craft Alliance Center of Art + Design in St. Louis and first presented there at Grand Center Gallery, features a range of art forms made with seemingly safe and comforting materials from everyday life that are loaded with incendiary content. Each object reflects an aspect of anxiety, discontent, and longing in the 21st century, from poverty and racism to mortality and digital disconnect.



"American Fork #4" by Sandra Dal Poggetto

Helena artist **Sandra Dal Poggetto**, whose painting "American Fork #4" was recently acquired by Buffalo Bill Center for the West for its Whitney Western Art Museum's Permanent Collection. She also gave a lecture, "Hidden in the Wide Open: Abstraction in Western Art," on June 26 at the Whitney Western Art Museum Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, WY.

Great Falls artist **Bob Kercher**, whose painting, "Basic Training," was selected as Ducks Unlimited's Print of the Year for 2014 from among 45 entries. This is the second time Kercher's work has been chosen for this honor in the past three years. In addition, Blodgett Canyon Cellars of Corvallis will be issuing a wine set of three flavors, featuring Kercher's painting on the labels; the wine will be offered exclusively at Ducks Unlimited fundraisers around the state.



"Basic Training" by Bob Kercher

Dennis Herning of Billings who won the inaugural Big Sky State Games Photo Contest. Herning also won the Silver medal for another photo he submitted, and **Cheryl Davis** claimed the Bronze medal. The top three winners receive four hours of studio time at Billings Open Studio along with two hours of instruction on studio lighting and post-production editing. The winning images will be entered in the National Congress of State Games National Photo Contest.

Eileen Crusta, a 10th grade home-school student in the Flathead Valley, who submitted the winning entry in the Glacier National Park and the Glacier National Park Conservancy's art contest. Her image of Bowman Lake and wild-life will appear on the 2015 Glacier National Park Annual Park Pass, available in January; approximately 14,000 passes will be issued during the year. **Ryan Kelly**, a seventh grade student at St. Matthews School, and **Ryann Thomas**, a sixth grader at C.R. Anderson Middle School, were recognized for second and third places, respectively. The art contest, open to students in grades 6-12, aims to improve stewardship and understanding of cultural and natural resources in the park. The winning artwork may be viewed on the park's website, www.nps.gov/glac, by clicking on the "For Kids" section.



Painting of Bowman Lake by Eileen Crusta

The **Billings Arts Association (BAA)**, which celebrates its 60th anniversary, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Oct. 4 at the Billings Public Library. The BAA was founded in 1954 as a branch of the Montana Institute of the Arts, a statewide organization established in 1948 to "... preserve the heritage of the state as found in its history and folklore; to stimulate creative work in the several arts; and to make these cultural resources available for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of Montana." An article titled "Wide Variety of the Arts Has Thrived Since Billings Founded," published in the *Billings Gazette* on Sept. 21, 1960, noted that the BAA hosted a foreign film festival, with offerings "vastly different from usual American film and television fare"; and a Christmas sale and reception that "draws large crowds to view oil and watercolor paintings, sculpture, mosaics, carving and ceramics produced by association members." By 1960, Bits of Sage, a collection of prose and poetry by members of the group, had sold 2,000 copies and a fourth edition was slated for publication that fall. In the early 1960s, the BAA was involved in efforts to convert the Yellowstone County Jail "into a Museum for the exhibition of Curiosities and works of art." That feat was accomplished more than 50 years ago, when community members teamed up with the BAA to establish the Yellowstone Art Center (now the Yellowstone Art Museum), which opened in 1964. At 60, the BAA continues to thrive, with a membership of 111. Members still hope to establish an "elusive community art center for Yellowstone County as well as a home for the association." Meanwhile, the group continues to stimulate creative work in the arts through gatherings, workshops, events and exhibitions. Arts education has also been a focus of the BAA, beginning in the early years, when scholarships were awarded to worthy college students. In 2007, BAA established IMAGES Art Grant, which now offers up to \$250 for art education projects. In 2013, four grants were awarded totaling \$1,000 – a commitment association artists "are very proud of, and will hopefully continue into the next 60 years." The public reception Oct. 4 includes a gallery display, program, lunch and more; for information or reservations, call Jeanette Magstadt at 406-656-0794. The BAA also hosts its annual Fall Festival of Arts Show and Sale, Sept. 12-13 at Gainan's Heights Garden Center; learn more at www.billingsartsassociation.com.



BAA Director Jacquie Kittson

TRANSITIONS

Welcome to **Virginia Bryan**, who has been named president of the Billings ArtWalk for the 2014-2015 season. She replaces **Sally McIntosh**, who is retiring after eight years at the helm. Bryan has over a decade of experience in the arts. She has served as a docent at the Yellowstone Art Museum and is a founder and chair of the High Plains Book Awards, a project of the Billings Public Library. A freelance writer, her work has appeared in *Yellowstone Valley Woman*, *Magic Magazine*, *Distinctly Montana*, *Latitudes*, *The Montana Lawyer*, and *Native Peoples*. A life-long Montanan, Bryan practiced law in Billings for over two decades before turning her attention to the arts. The Billings ArtWalk has recently merged with the Downtown Billings Association.

Welcome to **Jordan Pehler**, the new art educator at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings, who replaces long-time art educator Carol Welch. A Billings native, Pehler remembers visiting the museum on field trips when he was young. Now a credentialed art educator, he was most recently the education director at

the WaterWorks Art Museum in Miles City. He is an artist who primarily works in encaustic, graphite, charcoal and oil, and his work has been featured in the YAM Art Auction and various galleries around the state.

Best wishes to the former Upper Missouri Artists Gallery in Helena, which has changed its name to **Mountain Sage Gallery** and its location to 433 N. Last Chance Gulch. The gallery also welcomes five new members: jeweler **Dave Barnes** (former owner of Saunders Jewelry); painters **Marion Thompson**, **Ann Patterson Bishop** and **Tom Mostad**; and glass artist **Mary Harris**.

So long and best wishes to three long-time C.M. Russell Museum employees who are leaving their positions: **Susan Johnson**, chief operations officer, **Nancy Zadick**, finance coordinator, and **Donna Camp**, museum store manager. Johnson has been with the museum for 10 years and was responsible for several areas during her tenure. Zadick has worked at the museum since December 2008, and was vital in streamlining audit preparations, developing financial procedures and managing a major financial software conversion. Camp took the position of museum store manager with intentions of working for a couple months as an interim manager. She enjoyed working at the museum so much that she stayed for more than five years, stating that her co-workers are "golden." The trio was honored for their combined 21 years of employment during a reception Aug. 15.



Jordan Pehler